Reflection 1

I am an ESL Resource teacher at Iroquois High School, a school with the largest EL population in the state of Kentucky. We have approximately 200 ESL newcomers who move together through 9th grade content classes taught by teachers certified in ESL and the core content area. In addition, we have 200 students who have been in the U.S. longer, or who have transitioned out of the newcomer program. They have just one ESL/English class and take their other classes in the larger school. Finally, we have a group of 35 students who entered the U.S. school system at 17 or 18, and who are in danger of aging out of the system before they can earn a high school diploma. With this group, we have 1:1 technology (Chromebooks) and the goal of accelerating credits so that these students can earn a diploma before their 21st birthday.

It is with this group (Accelerate to Graduate) that I am focusing my TPACK reflection. With a foundation in Project-Based learning, this program is experimental. Several of our students have been in Iraq or Syria, and have endured a long interruption in their education. Others are from refugee camps in Kenya or Uganda without a formally organized education system. Most of them have been in the country only two years, and their smart phones are their most precious possession. However, most of these students are digital immigrants due to impoverished conditions they have grown up in.

In the setting of an accelerated personalized learning environment, developing a comfort with the technology is a key element. With the three teachers who are responsible for this program, I have developed Google classroom spaces that represent courses across the curriculum. Using the TPACK model, we have discussed when and how the curriculum best intersects with the technological tools. We have designed Blendspaces for biology content, as a supplement to the larger project to design and build a Cobb oven for the Iroquois Gardens, a partnership with the Food Literacy Project. (<https://www.tes.com/lessons/rvb7Gu-ZDKRb9A/food-web-construction>)

One of the struggles in this program is that we have digital natives alongside students who have never touched a keyboard before.